

Message Text

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ACTION NASA-04

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DEPT PASS NASA FOR FRUTKIN, CODE I

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TSPA, GW

SUBJECT: LAUNCH OF HELIOS A

1. FOLLOWING IS INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF GERMAN LANGUAGE SEPTEMBER 27 TELEX FROM DR. FINKE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR SPACE SYSTEMS, FRG MINISTRY OF RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY, TO ARNOLD FRUTKIN, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, NASA. FINKE EXPLAINED TO EMBASSY THAT TELEX DISPATCHED IN GERMAN TO PLACE THEIR DECISION ON RECORD ASAP. WE REVIEWED FOLLOWING TRANSLATION WITH HIM TO ASSURE THAT ITS EMPHASIS WAS CORRECT.

2. BEGIN INFORMAL TRANSLATION:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TELETYPE OF SEPTEMBER 21 WITH YOUR RECOMMENDATION ON THE LAUNCH OF HELIOS A. WE HAVE VERY CAREFULLY EXAMINED THIS RECOMMENDATION AND THE JUSTIFICATION YOU OFFER AND I CAN INFORM YOU TODAY THAT WE ARE READY TO ACCEPT IT. HOWEVER, WE REACHED THIS DECISION ONLY BY IGNORING SIGNIFICANT OBJECTIONS, SINCE WE ARE OF THE OPINION THAT YOUR RECOMMENDATION GREATLY INCREASES THE TECHNICAL RISK FOR THE HELIOS A

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LAUNCH IN COMPARISON WITH THE EARLIER ALTERNATIVE WHICH

WE HAD PREFERRED.

3. IN MY OPINION THESE RISKS MUST BE GIVEN EVEN GREATER WEIGHT SINCE, DURING THE PAST MONTHS, THE LAUNCHING RISK FOR HELIOS A HAS ALREADY INCREASED CONSIDERABLY, AS COMPARED WITH THE ORIGINAL PLAN. ON THE ONE HAND THE LAUNCH PATH NOW REQUIRES A SECOND BURN OF THE CENTAUR-UPPER STAGE, AND ON THE OTHER HAND A NEW FLIGHT COMPUTER MUST BE USED FOR THE CENTAUR STAGE.

4. A LAUNCH AFTER THAT OF INTELSAT IV WHICH WE HAVE PREFERRED SO FAR, WOULD HAVE HAD AT LEAST ONE ADVANTAGE: AN IN-FLIGHT TEST OF THE MODIFIED CENTAUR ROCKET. THE DATE YOU HAVE NOW SUGGESTED MEANS THAT HELIOS A WILL BE STARTED WITH A MODIFIED CENTAUR STAGE NOT PREVIOUSLY TESTED IN FLIGHT. YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THAT THIS CAUSES US CONCERN.

5. I WOULD, THEREFORE, BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD, IN CONNECTION WITH OUR ACCEPTANCE OF YOUR SUGGESTIONS, ONCE AGAIN CONFIRM THE ASSURANCES GIVEN IN APRIL; UNDER WHICH IN CASE OF A FAILURE OF THE FIRST HELIOS LAUNCH YOU WOULD TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY ENDEAVOR TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO US AN ADDITIONAL LAUNCHER ROCKET FOR A THIRD LAUNCH, AND PROVIDE THE NECESSARY SUPPORT. MOREOVER, I TAKE IT FOR GRANTED THAT YOU WILL ASSIST ME IN TRYING TO AVOID DIFFICULTIES WHICH COULD ARISE FROM THE OVERLAPPING OF THE HELIOS A AND SYMPHONIE LAUNCHES BY MAKING AVAILABLE YOUR JPL GROUND STATION. FURTHERMORE THE DATE NOW ESTABLISHED SHOULD NOT AGAIN BE JEOPARDIZED BY OTHER PROJECTS, AS FOR INSTANCE THE INTELSAT SATELLITE.
WITH KINDEST PERSONAL REGARDS, FINKE. END TRANSLATION
HILLENBRAND

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